



# Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

*A Voice of the Veterans*

Week Ending Sunday, September 24, 2017

Volume 8, Issue 39



## **This-N-That**

Recently Secretary Shulkin signed off on awarding \$188 million dollars in grants to help the homeless, and this truly upsets me to no end as I've not really ever seen any REAL evidence it's helped. Maybe a few here and there, but no where near enough.

And not long ago Secretary Shulkin announced the VA would be closing some leases and getting rid of buildings and properties that were "under used!"

The much better move would have been to use that \$188 million dollars to renovate and improve the buildings the VA owns and convert them all to small convenience

apartments for Veterans.

Then the Veterans would not only have a place to live, but also be in very close proximity to the much needed medical care and the VA could arrange for health and safety checks with VA hospital staff, or, if short staffed use outside services.

But to me this would have been a much better win/win situation than to just hand out cash to outside agencies, some who had already proven they were not "service" oriented, but more like so many people today with their hands out who don't need it.

I remember one agency in trying to help a Veteran get housing, food and medical care, and VA Homefront had referred me to the agency who had just received their grant funding less than ten days before I had called them.

When I was able to reach them on the phone I was informed their funding had been exhausted, later to learn their funding had been used to purchase new office equipment, furniture, and lease a much larger facility. So how on earth did this help a single homeless Veteran?

The VA has also announce it will be opening a third Veteran Crisis Call Center.

The new call center will be located in Topeka, Kansas and is expected to be staff by 100 employees.

Secretary David Shulkin has said "when it comes to

preventing Veteran suicide, we will do everything we can to make it as easy as possible for Veterans to reach us!"

It's our sincere hope that this new call center will be a real blessing vs. a real nightmare! And it's truly only the beginning to really addressing the more serious problems of claims approvals leading to benefits and medical care.

On a more serious note, the VA claims backlog has once again topped ONE MILLION! In the process thousands have died waiting.

In my opinion this only cements the unwritten and unspoken motto of the VA, delay, deny and wait till they die!

Very sad how our country treats all those who have served after decades or promises to care for them.

In this newsletter there are several "Take Action" notices and I urge you to please, click on the links and send off the pre-written E-Mails, then share the newsletter with friends and family and ask that each of them also send off the E-Mails, then forward to their mailing lists.

You don't have to be a Veteran, spouse of a Veteran or children of a Veteran. In fact the more we pass information on to all our civilian friends, the more we are educating them and able to seek their assistance as well.

I'd also like to ask all our readers to send a message to President Trump and politely ask him to seriously tell

Secretary Shulkin to not close leases and sell off any VA property or land and spend the money to convert to small apartments for our homeless Veterans! You can do so by clicking [HERE](#).

On behalf of our Volunteers nationwide and myself, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

[Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org)

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## **Military Budget Update: Congress Can't Be Shamed**

Despite Defense Secretary Jim Mattis' efforts to shame the Senate Armed Services Committee into passing a budget on time, it appears those same lawmakers who routinely praise the military and lament deteriorating readiness continue to fail to reach a budget compromise on schedule.

Read more about the impact this has on our military readiness, click [HERE](#).

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## **A Brief Request and a Favor**

Dear Fellow Veterans and Colleagues,

A brief request and a favor. Right now, while you're reading this ... put this in your phone. National Veterans Crisis Line, **800-273-8255**.

You never know when you or a Veteran you know might need some help, right now. Now you have a number that can help.

Thank you.

Curtis L. Coy  
Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity  
Veterans Benefits Administration  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Washington, DC 20420

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# Abilities Job Fair

For veterans and individuals with disabilities  
*Tuesday, September 12<sup>th</sup> 10AM - 1PM*  
*War Memorial Building*

Come in professional attire  
and bring your resume!

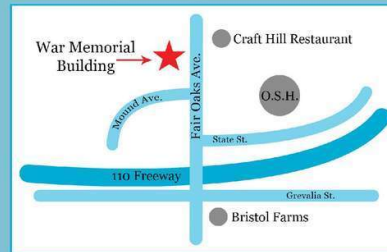
Accommodations for job seekers available - contact  
Nita Davis at [ndavis@almansor.org](mailto:ndavis@almansor.org)

Employers - contact Lupe Vasquez at  
[gvasquez@almansor.org](mailto:gvasquez@almansor.org) or 626-755-4382

[www.redesignlearning.org](http://www.redesignlearning.org)

435 Fair Oaks Avenue  
South Pasadena, CA 91030

*Just north of the 110 freeway,  
across from Craft Hill Restaurant.*



Sponsored By:



**Support SBP/DIC Offset Repeal Legislation**

Senator Nelson (FL) has introduced legislation (S. 339) and Congressman Joe Wilson (SC) has introduced identical legislation in the house (HR 846) that repeals the SBP/DIC offset for survivors, sometimes referred to as the "Military Widows Tax.". Please use this action center contact your legislators to ask them to support this important legislation.

### [Take Action!](#)

Please, even if you have already sent this pre-written E-Mail, do it again, and forward the link to your friends, family, etc via an E-Mail and ask them too, to please sign and forward on to their address book.

We need to take care of our widows too! Current, past and future!

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## **TRICARE State of Emergency Hurricane Update**

The governors of Florida, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Georgia, and the US Virgin Islands have declared a State of Emergency for certain counties due to Hurricane Irma. A list of the counties affected is available on the [TRICARE website](#). To obtain an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any [TRICARE](#) retail network pharmacy. To find a network pharmacy, call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 or search the [network pharmacy locator](#). If possible, visit the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. If you are evacuated, you may not have to get a referral from your primary care manager to see a TRICARE authorized provider. Click [here](#) for a list of locations affected is available.

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## **Take Command to Make a Smooth Transition with TRICARE in 2018**

You may be wondering what action you need to take, if any, to ensure you continue TRICARE coverage in 2018. If you're currently enrolled in or eligible for TRICARE coverage on Dec. 31, 2017, you'll transition to your respective TRICARE plan on Jan. 1, 2018. If you want to enroll in a TRICARE plan or change coverage after Jan. 1, 2018, you'll need to take action to enroll in the plan of your choice.

Read the full article [HERE](#).

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## **Suicide Prevention Month**

September is Suicide Prevention Month. Risks for suicide include people with substance abuse problems, those experiencing loss or guilt, feelings of isolation, and those undergoing stress. This is why it is important for commanders at every level to know the Airmen they supervise. This commitment to connection is backed by the Air Force's adoption of the ACE method, which stands for 'Ask, Care, Escort,' which guide Airmen when confronted with someone contemplating suicide. The [Air Force Suicide Prevention website](#) has more information on ACE and other resources. If you, or someone you know, needs immediate help, call the Military Crisis Line and speak to a counselor by dialing 800-273-TALK and pressing 1.

## **Members of the Guard and Reserve - Defending Our Nation Again**

Prior to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Guard and Reserve forces were generally not used as operational forces, but were considered to be strategic. In other words, they were not used regularly to perform the duties that active forces did. Those two wars, however, changed all of that and while it remains to be seen what the future holds, the Guard and Reserve components today are considered to be strategic.

Winning the respect of the public, as well as that of their active duty counterparts, did not come easy, but as the deaths were reported from the battle fields and the wounded came home, it was obvious that the Guard and Reserve forces were in the thick of the fight and were an integral part of the U.S. military.

However, what most people forget is that in addition to now being called up much more often for active duty missions, the Army and Air National Guard are still susceptible to being mobilized for state emergencies. The mobilization of the Texas Guard in response to hurricane Harvey has brought that fact back to everyone's attention.

What is not well-known, however, are the sacrifices members of the Guard and their families must deal with when they are mobilized as state forces.

They usually have very little advanced notice that they will

be mobilized, which can complicate things with their civilian employers, to say the least.

The next issue they deal with is uncertainty about when they will be paid. Since mobilization pay is different from regular drill pay, it takes time to get the pay system in operation. It varies from state to state but in the case of the Texas it could take a month before Guard members get a paycheck.

While some employers will continue to pay them their regular salary, most do not. Some will make up the difference between their civilian pay and their Guard pay, but it is likely that many, perhaps most, Guard members have to take unpaid leave. That means no pay until they finally get a Guard paycheck.

In addition, what the members are paid varies from state to state. Some members are paid according to their rank, but in other states everyone is paid a flat fee per day, regardless of their rank. That is all governed by state law, and in some states that flat fee is minimal.

This creates problems for nearly all Guard members, but young troops who may be making minimum wage in their civilian jobs can face severe financial hardships. This means that some families have to go on government assistance, or what some people refer to as "government welfare."

In addition, in most state mobilizations, the troops are not called up on federal orders. That means they do not qualify

for federal benefits, including military health care. And unless they are already qualified as veterans, they do not get VA benefits.

There can also be a problem in keeping in touch with their families. As in the case of hurricane Harvey, cell phone towers can be out of operation making phone calls back home difficult, if not impossible.

In cases where there's a flood, things as basic as dry boots and dry clothes can be difficult, and they may have to rely on MREs for their meals for several days, if not weeks.

Finally, there is the real danger of working in life-threatening situations. Many people have died in the Texas flooding, including a sheriff's deputy. Members of the Guard are in that same environment, many doing the same rescue work as the deputy.

All of this should serve to remind us that these are not just "weekend warriors." These are men and women who proudly serve our nation, doing their duty when they are called upon to defend our nation, be it from a foreign enemy or from Mother Nature herself, who can be just as deadly and destructive as a foreign enemy. giving orders in combat that result in the injury or death of a fellow service member or failing to report a sexual assault or rape.

Source: TREA

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**Legislation to Eliminate Copayment Requirements for Essential Preventive Medications and Medical Services for Veterans Using VA Health Care**

Representative Lee Zeldin (NY) and Senator Tammy Duckworth (IL) introduced the Veterans Preventive Health Coverage Fairness Act (H.R. 1100 and S. 1161), legislation that would eliminate requirements for veterans to make copayments for medical care and medications related to

preventive health services delivered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This legislation would place VA in parity with the Department of Defense, as well as meeting the Affordable Care Act's standard relative to copayments for preventive health services for private sector health plans.

For veterans required to make copayments, VA charges \$15 for basic care and \$50 for specialty care visits and between \$5-\$11 for medication. With the passage of this legislation, veterans would continue to benefit from VA preventive health care and wellness services, but without the cost sharing. The VA health care system has been a leader in quality care and promoting the benefits of preventative services for veterans-many who are life-long patients. With its medically complex patient population, coordinating a comprehensive array of preventive and wellness services has helped VA contain costs and improve health outcomes for veterans. However, VA has been out of step in requiring copayments for health maintenance and preventive care services.

The United States Preventive Services Task Force, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and the Health Resources and Services Administration have made suggestions for preventative services including vaccines and women's preventive health care - such as mammograms, screenings for cervical cancer, prenatal care, and other services that show significant benefit in disease prevention. These services are now routinely provided free of charge in private sector care plans.

These bills are consistent with DAV Resolution No. 115, which calls for the elimination or reduction of medical and medication co-pays, and DAV Resolution No. 128, calling for support of comprehensive health care services in VA. Veterans, through their patriotism, devotion, and sacrifices, have already paid the price for their health care, and as a grateful nation, our government should fully honor its moral obligation to care for veterans and generously provide them benefits and health care entirely without charge.

Please use the prepared messages to contact your elected officials and ask that they cosponsor and pass this important legislation-H.R. 1100 or S. 1161.

Thank you for advocating on behalf of our nation's ill and injured veterans through the DAV Commander's Action Network.

Click [HERE](#) in and send your message!



U.S. Government Accountability  
Office Reports

No reports this week!

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**TRICARE State of Emergency Wildfire  
Update**

The governors of Washington and California have declared a State of Emergency in some areas due to Wildfires. A list of the counties affected is available on the [TRICARE website](#). To obtain an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any [TRICARE retail network pharmacy](#). To find a network pharmacy, call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 or search the [network pharmacy locator](#). If possible, visit the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. If you use a retail chain, you can fill your prescription at another store in that chain. If your provider is available, he or she may call in a new prescription to any network pharmacy. You can request assistance at another pharmacy, but it is at that pharmacy's discretion to help you.

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**CONTACT YOUR  
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS!**

To Call your Representative:

**202-225-2305**

To Call your Senators:

**202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553**

To call Different Members of Congress:

**202-224-3121**

**TOLL FREE: 866-272-6622**

**PLEASE... STOP Making Excuses!**

**[www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)**

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## **TREA: The Enlisted Association Supports "Bad Paper" Veterans**

For the last year or so the issue of "bad paper" veterans, those who are discharged from the military with general or other-than honorable discharges, has been getting more attention. The issue is particularly sensitive because many of these veterans have been previously diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the behavior that got them discharged from the military can often be traced directly back to their diagnosis.

In fact, of the nearly 92,000 servicemembers the military discharged between 2011 and 2015 more than 60 percent have previously been diagnosed with PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or another condition within the two years prior to their discharge. Of all the Marines that have gotten out of the service since 2001, roughly 10 percent have been given "bad paper" discharges. An other-than-honorable discharge can prevent these veterans from accessing medical, housing, and education benefits. These servicemembers are often the most in need, and with "bad paper" they are prevented from receiving the help from the VA that they need.

To access VA healthcare servicemembers generally need to have an honorable discharge, or they need to get a waiver from the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs Dr. David Shulkin. However, earlier this summer Secretary Shulkin announced that the VA would begin offering emergency mental health services for up to 90 days to veterans with other than honorable discharges.

While it is a good first step, housing, general healthcare, employment and education services are also major needs of this population of veterans and Secretary Shulkin's action does nothing to address it.

The San Antonio Express-News had a great article earlier this month on the issue:

<http://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/VA-policy-hinders-veterans-courts-in-aiding-12167681.php>

TREA: The Enlisted Association has been working with several other groups to get this group of veterans the help that they need.

Getting basic services from the VA is only half of the problem. The military has a complicated discharge upgrade process run through Military Discharge Review Boards. Former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel issued a memo back in 2015 which directed the boards to give "liberal consideration" to discharge upgrade requests that show a direct correlation between the behavior the precipitated the "bad paper" discharge and PTSD. It was only LAST MONTH that DOD actually clarified that definition in favor of the veteran seeking relief.

If you or anyone you know needs help with a discharge upgrade due to PTSD you got while you were in the service, go to: <http://www.nvlsp.org/what-we-do/lawyers-serving-warriors/assistance-with-discharge-upgrades-for-veterans-from-all-eras>

The National Veterans Legal Service Program has

resources that can help you get the relief you need.

Source: TREA

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## **Discover Your Career Path – Take Our 3-4 Minute Survey Now**

Military Skills Translator + Personality Assessment is a unique career exploration tool for veterans & service members that combines job search technology and vocational personality types. **Get started on your path to career discovery today.**

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### ***Veterans-For-Change Web Site***

The Veterans-For-Change website has been under construction since day one back in 2009 and every day since then. The looks pretty much stay the same, but in the background constant improvement and change is being done to make our website the most user friendly “One-Stop-Shop” website to find almost everything you might have tried to find searching the internet.

Almost a hundred people have been involved; collecting web links to documents now houses on the VFC website, collecting thousands of web links for various issues, illnesses and benefits. Creating forums for all eras of service and two forums one just for men and one just for

woman where you can go question, comment, share medical and personal concerns, what ever you'd like it to be.

We also have a forum with a licensed Mental Health Worker, again where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average 2,200 hits per day, and downloads average 1,200 per day with a total 3,567,518 visitors as of Friday.

If you subscribe you will have full access to the entire website and best of all it's FREE of charge! You just need a valid E-mail address so the system can send you a confirmation E-Mail. Once received, click on the link to be authorized automatically.

[www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

- Documents Library with over 16,142 documents on-line (Updated: 8/12/17)
- FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers
- Multiple Forums
  - o Afghanistan Veterans
  - o FMP - Foreign Medial Program
  - o Gulf War & Desert Storm Veterans
  - o Iraq Veterans
  - o Korean Veterans
  - o Men Veterans Forum
  - o Mental Health for Veterans
  - o Political Issues
  - o Suggestion Box

- o The Mess Hall
- o VA Hospitals and Medical Centers
- o Veteran Affairs
- o Vietnam Veterans
- o Welcome Mat
- o Women Veterans Forum
- o WW II Veterans
- Job Postings
- Memorial Pages (Updated: 10/10/16)
- News (Articles On-Line: 6,758)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,608, Added 17 New Links  
(Updated: 08/12/17)

If you have a submission for the memorial pages, E-Mail:  
[Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

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**HELP OUR BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM  
VETERANS HR299 & GUAM ISLANDS  
VETERANS HR 809 EMAIL**

Write to President Trump-

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>, then contact the

House Committee on Veterans Affairs -

<https://Veterans.house.gov/forms/writethecommittee>, then

send an E-Mail to the Secretary of the VA David Shulkin -

[David.Shulkin@va.gov](mailto:David.Shulkin@va.gov).

Tell them to give All Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans & Guam-Islands exposed to Agent Orange Presumption Of Exposure To Agent Orange.

Please ask All your family & friends to email and share with All Sites.

Thank you,

Michael Kvintus, Sr.



**Legislation to Improve Access to Child  
Care for Veterans In Need of VA Mental  
Health Care Services**

Congressman Brian Higgins (NY) introduced H.R. 3368, a bill that would improve access to child care services for veterans receiving certain Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care treatments including intensive or regular mental health care services or other types of health care deemed appropriate by the Secretary.

Veterans who are the primary caretakers of their children often cite lack of child care as a significant barrier to accessing needed medical care services-especially specialized services for war-related mental health conditions. H.R. 3368 would authorize VA to provide child care at an on-site VA facility, reimburse a private licensed child care agency for such care or collaborate with other federal agencies for the service helping to remove a known barrier for ill and injured veterans with child care responsibilities to access essential VA health care services.

Please use the letter below to urge your Representative to cosponsor and support passage of H.R. 3368-legislation to improve access to child care for veterans in need of VA mental health or other critical medical care services.

Thank you for your efforts and continued support of the Commander's Action Network.

Click [HERE](#) and send your message!

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**VA Mental Health Services**

Veterans enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care receive high-quality mental health services, including inpatient and outpatient care for depression, readjustment, substance use disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma and more. Veterans can learn more about VA mental health services and how to apply for VA health care at [Explore.VA.gov](https://www.explore.va.gov) or by visiting the [Veterans' Mental Health Services and Coverage webpage](#). If you or a Veteran you know is in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1.



**VA Benefits After Hurricane Harvey**



Significant disruptions in US Postal Service (USPS) are expected around Houston and Rio Grande, Texas, which may affect receiving VA benefits. VA's [Veterans Benefits Administration](#) (VBA) has developed mechanisms to help Veterans receive their benefit payments if their normal mail cannot be delivered. Outreach coordinators at the Dallas and Houston shelters will offer benefits assistance to Veterans who have been sheltered there. Veterans participating in VR&E services programs may be eligible for up to two additional months of the Employment Adjustment Allowance, if they are displaced from their home as a result of a natural or other disaster. VA will consider school attendance as continuous and payments will not be affected. For more information, read the VA [Vantage Point Blog](#).



## **S. 946, a Bill to Help Justice-Involved Veterans**

The veterans' treatment court model was established to remove veterans from the regular criminal justice process and to provide an opportunity for the veteran to address conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse disorder that that may have led to their

involvement in the justice system. In a veterans' treatment court, the presiding judge works with the veteran and a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Justice Outreach specialist to establish a structured rehabilitation program and treatment plan that is tailored to the specific needs of the individual veteran.

S. 946, the Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act of 2017, requires the VA to hire additional Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) specialists to ensure veterans have greater access to effective and tailored treatment.

The bill authorizes \$5.5 million for each fiscal year beginning in FY 2017 through 2027 to hire 50 additional VJO Specialists. Funding priority would be given to VA facilities that work with newly established or existing but understaffed veterans' treatment courts. The legislation requires annual reporting on the implementation of the bill as well as its effect on the VJO program and a mandate for the Government Accountability Office to review and report on the implementation of the bill and the overall effectiveness of the VJO program for justice-involved veterans.

DAV Resolution No. 105 notes that veterans' treatment courts evolved from a proven national model of diversionary drug and mental health courts to address the specific challenges many wartime veterans face post service and calls for the continued growth of veterans' treatment courts.

Please use the prepared letter to write to your Senators and request support and passage of S. 946, the Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act of 2017. Thank you for your efforts and support of the Commander's Action Network.

Click [HERE](#) and send your message!



# Salute to Vietnam!

October 21, 2017

Cocktails start at 5:00 pm

Dinner and Silent Auction

Live Entertainment by Phoenix Patriot Band

Come Dress in your 1970's Attire

**French Valley Airport, Hangar 31**

33750 Sky Canyon Drive

Murrieta, CA 92563

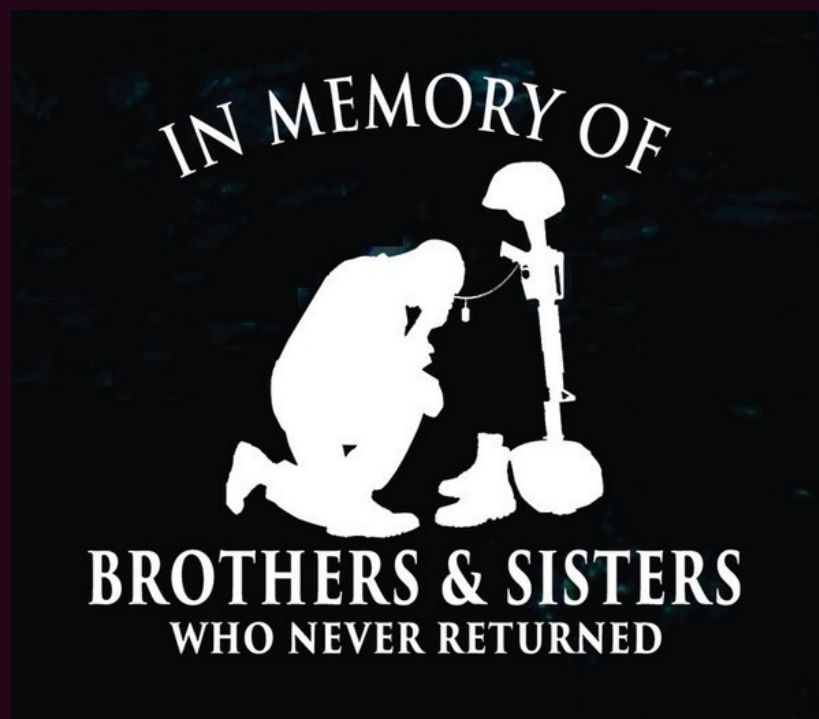
Purchase tickets by phone (951) 696-3901

\$65/per person or \$100/per couple



## Senate Approves Waiver

The Senate has approved a special waiver that will allow a monument for the post-9/11 war on terror to be built. Following action by the House in July, the waiver paves the way for construction of what's being called the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial (GWOT Memorial). The Commemorative Works Act requires Congress 'to wait 10 years after the official end of a military conflict before considering a memorial in the nation's capital.' With the war on terror far from over, that presented a problem. The waiver ensures that the first generation of warriors who fought the GWOT will be able to appreciate the memorial. For more information, visit the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation [website](#).



## **A Look at Suicide Prevention**

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S. Military suicide rates have been increasing and surpassing the rates for society at large. Know the warning signs, which include thoughts or comments about suicide, substance abuse, purposelessness, anxiety, feeling trapped or hopeless, withdrawal, anger, recklessness, and mood changes. Military members who seek behavioral health care are protected by law against discrimination. For free, confidential support 24/7, call the Military Crisis Line at 800-273-TALK (8255), text 838255, or chat online on the Veterans Crisis Line [website](#). There is also the Be There Peer Support outreach center, staffed by veterans and military spouses. Call 844-357-PEER (7337), text 480-360-6188, or [chat online 24/7](#).



**Communications After Hurricane Evac**

Many Navy personnel have evacuated to safe havens in advance of Hurricane Irma. Now, what is the next step? Military personnel and civilian employees should contact their supervisors upon safe arrival at a safe haven location and stay in touch on a regular basis. Also, all evacuated personnel and family members should log into the Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS) upon arrival to their safe haven location to update their status. The NFAAS app is available through your mobile app store for download at no cost to all active duty personnel, family members, and DoD and NAF civilians. You can also muster at the [NFAAS website](#) or call (877) 414-5358.

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### **Veteran Crisis Resources**

**Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**  
**Military Crisis Line 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**  
**National Call Center for Homeless Veterans**  
**1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)**  
**VA Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274**

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**Statement Regarding Last Friday's Alert  
About the Senate NDAA**

Last Friday we sent out an alert asking you to contact your Senators about the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that they were going to vote on very soon. Many, many of you responded and we thank you for that.

Unfortunately, due to a computer error, those of you who tried to respond early on had difficulty doing so for one reason or another. We believe the error has now been fixed.

However, the Senate voted last night and passed the NDAA.

Now, the bill will go to a conference committee with the House of Representatives where the differences between the Senate-passed version and the House-passed version will be worked out until they come up with one bill.

Fortunately, the House-passed version is much better than the Senate version.

We will be determining what our next strategy will be to try stop the bad provisions in the Senate bill and let you know within the next few days.

Thank you for your support as we work together to stop Congress from once again taking away more of our promised and earned military benefits.

Source: TREA

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## **Support Veterans Exposed to Burn Pits Act, HR 1279**

Representative Elizabeth Esty, ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability and Memorial Assistance, introduced H.R. 1279, the Helping Veterans Exposed to Burn Pits Act. The bill would establish a Center of Excellence in preventing, diagnosing, mitigating, treating and rehabilitating conditions related to veterans' exposure to burn pits during Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. The Center would be charged with using data from the registry to study whether exposure is associated with long-term health effects in veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan in addition to improving diagnosis and treatments for those exposed.

VA's website states that exposure to toxins found in the burn pits may be associated with skin, eye, respiratory, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, or internal organ problems. Exposure to burn pits is generally associated with short-term effects, such as eye irritation, acute respiratory symptoms, and skin itching or rashes. However, according to a 2011 Institute of Medicine report, fine dust particles and pollution in Iraq and Afghanistan may actually be more responsible for respiratory illness claimed by veterans who



served there.

DAV Resolution No. 237 supports improvement of care and benefits for veterans exposed to toxins and environmental hazards, including a rigorous research agenda to identify any associations between such exposures and adverse health outcomes.

Please write your elected officials and urge their co-sponsorship and support for passage of H.R. 1279. Thank you for your continued efforts and participation in the DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network).

Click [HERE](#) and send your message!

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## Links to Other Stories

- 1) [Can Coffee or Tea Extend Survival With Diabetes?](#)
- 2) [Disability backlog tops 1 million; thousands die on waitlist](#)
- 3) [Former Blue Angels, Thunderbirds Oppose ATC Privatization](#)
- 4) [Military Transition to Civilian Career](#)
- 5) [My HealtheVet has a New Look - Check it Out!](#)
- 6) [New DoD videos feature Veterans sharing their experiences of TBI recovery and hope](#)
- 7) [Ring the bell: Veterans call for Veterans to help end suicide](#)
- 8) [Sen. Moran Statement on Veteran Suicide Data](#)

Released by the Department of Veterans Affairs

- 9) VA Awards \$188 Million in Grant Funding to Help Homeless Veterans
- 10) VA NCA Veterans Legacy Program Field Trip
- 11) VA reaches out to Veterans in Tampa after Hurricane Irma
- 12) VA Releases Veteran Suicide Statistics by State
- 13) VA Removes Former D.C. Medical Center Director
- 14) VA to make beds available where possible to non-Veteran nursing home residents affected by Hurricane Irma
- 15) VA Unveils Claims Submission Option That Promises to Complete Claims within 30 Days
- 16) Veterans Crisis Line to Open Third Call Center in Topeka, Kansas
- 17) Veterans with Disabilities Gear Up for Adventure at San Diego Summer Sports Clinic
- 18) With VA Adaptive Sports, life has become a joy

You can help VFC by reading articles posted and commenting at the bottom and rate the articles. If you don't have an account, sign up today, it's FREE. Your comments and rankings tell us what type of information you want most.

Check us out today: [www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

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**DoD Issues Warning About Social Media**

Leaders are calling on servicemembers, Department of Defense (DoD) employees and families to take a more proactive role in social media. Potential foreign adversaries are using social media to make threats toward servicemembers. A Soldier within the U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria footprint recently received messages on a private Facebook page deemed by investigators as malicious and aggressive. Be smart and keep a low profile. If you or someone you know is in receipt of threatening or malicious social media messaging, you can submit an [online report at iSalute](#). To learn more on how to protect you and your family on social media, visit the [Army's Social Media Handbook](#) or the Army Cyber Command's cybersecurity [awareness fact sheets](#).



**Donations to Aid Vets Impacted by  
Hurricane Harvey**

As a result of Hurricane Harvey, many Veterans and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees have lost their possessions and homes. An exception has been authorized for a special solicitation to allow federal employees to assist the disaster relief efforts with cash or check donations outside of the normal Combined Federal Campaign. This special solicitation has been authorized at VA. Donations can be made on the [PenFed Foundation website](#) or by sending a check to PenFed Foundation, 2930 Eisenhower Ave, Alexandria, VA 22314. Also, the Veterans Canteen Service will make available collection boxes in all Canteens. This special solicitation will conclude on September 29, 2017.

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## **WWI Commission Seeks Memorial Inscriptions**

The World War I Centennial Commission is seeking worthy quotations for inclusion on the new WWI Centennial Memorial. There are no restrictions on what might be a suitable quotation other than probably being limited to a paragraph in length. There are three ways to submit your recommendations: posting in the comments section on the [Roads to the Great War website](#), or (2) by e-mail to [greatwar@earthlink.net](mailto:greatwar@earthlink.net) or to [fontaine@abmc.gov](mailto:fontaine@abmc.gov). Submissions can be done anonymously or with your name and address or hometown included. For more information, visit the [Roads to the Great War website](#).

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**New VA Decision Ready Claims Option**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has unveiled the Decision Ready Claims (DRC) initiative that promises to deliver faster disability claims decisions for claims for increased compensation (claims for increase). The DRC initiative is a collaborative effort between VA and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs). Veterans who choose to submit their claim under DRC can expect to receive a decision within 30 days from the time VA receives the claim. VSOs will ensure all supporting evidence is included with the claim submission, which will allow claims to be assigned immediately to claims processors for a quick decision. VA hopes to eventually expand the types of claims accepted under the initiative.

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## **Hurricane Preparation Reminder**

When preparing for a hurricane or other natural disaster, here are several tips: (1) pay attention to the news to track the upcoming storm's progress; (2) create an emergency supply kit; (3) ensure vehicles are fueled up and serviceable; (4) store loose items around the house such as hoses and grills, and (5) follow local directions from the local authorities. For more tips, visit the [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) website.

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